

Contributions

RELIGION IN BUSINESS

B. C. MOOMAW

The announcement of this subject may provoke curiosity to know whether there is any of that divine commodity in the affairs of this world, and admiration for the genius who should be able to discover it. Take facts as they are, not as they ought to be, and we find that selfishness is the underlying spirit of business. Under the present constitution of things we do not see how it could be otherwise. After a man makes his fortune he may become a philanthropist, but if he does, he then acts upon principles diametrically opposite to those which guided his conduct when he was gathering in the shekels. Business gathers, benevolence scatters. If Bellamy's co-operative community were a practical and workable thing, there would come into business as much of the spirit of benevolence as of selfishness, for every one would then be promoting his own welfare by promoting the welfare of others. The day may come when co-operation will supplant competition, and if it is found to solve the serious social and economical problems which are now vexing and irritating our extant civilization, there will indeed be the dawn of a golden age.

But the Christian cannot wait for this far-off era of universal brotherhood. Since it is absolutely necessary that he should plunge into business, in competition not only with the world which it is his mission to save, but also with his brother Christian whom he is bound to love as himself, the question rises before him large and ominous, how he shall mix his business and his religion so as to make a homogeneous mass, a harmonious union, unvexed with contradictory and irreconcilable principles. If he succeeds in business he must look out for number one; if he succeeds in religion he must look out for the other numbers. All admit that selfishness is incompatible with religion; the question arises, is selfishness in business compatible with unselfishness in religion? Yonder is a prominent church member, an officer in the congregation. In that community religion is more or less on trial in that man's person. The unconverted are judging it by his conduct. Perhaps they ought not to do so, perhaps they are mistaken in their premises and illogical in their conclusions, but that doesn't alter the facts. Not only is that man's profession on trial, but the divine claims of religion are on trial in his walk and conversation, and in the methods which he employs in business. The question is: how much eagerness can he display to make money; how large a profit can he demand from labor; how close can he

shave to sharp bargains; to what extent can he damage his neighbor's business by a powerful tho legitimate competition; to what length can he use his superior power to forge thro the throng, shoving others aside; to what extent can he put men consciously or unconsciously on their guard against him, and still retain unimpaired his influence as a Christian? If he has a suspicion that these very common, and as the world goes very proper, business principles are incompatible with the Christ-likeness which constitutes the essence of religion, the question then confronts him, how far he is willing to forego gain, to what extent is he ready to incur loss, how far is he willing to trust that providence which promises all needful things to those who seek FIRST the kingdom of God and his righteousness, in order that the influence of his life and character may recommend religion, and to the greatest possible degree glorify God?

The subject is an important one because in the first place Christianity is more damaged and its influence more weakened by the business methods and business spirit of its professors than by any other one thing. Protruding selfishness cannot be made to have a sanctified look, and the shrewd getter is hardly ever canonized as a saint. When deacon Muckrake passes around the communion wine, satan smiles. When brother Grab prays you can hear a snicker on the back benches.

In the second place it is important because it is the mission of Christianity and therefore of Christians to bring to pass the now idealized era of universal brotherhood, a consummation which it will be impossible to realize so long as there remains in force, in any of the relations between men, recognized and tolerated principles which in their logical effects are inimical to the divine spirit of fraternity.

OUR COLLEGE

J. L. GILLIN

Every loyal son and daughter of the Brethren church ought to give God thanks that we can say *our* college.

Our college now needs three things, our prayers, our students and our money. The statistics gathered by the secretary last year showed that out of fifty-five churches only five observed Ashland College day. Some reason has been in the excuse of the last fifteen years that as we should probably not be able to hold the school, it was useless to waste effort or prayers on it. But by the prayers and efforts of some the college has been saved to us. Let the churches all over our brotherhood remember Ashland College day. Let the preachers preach an educational sermon. Let prayers, heart-felt and earnest ascend to God on behalf of our school and

its officers and instructors, and, of course we must not forget Ashland in our other prayers.

But Ashland needs our students as well as our prayers. Only thirty-four young people were reported as seeking higher education. But, pastors, it is a duty we owe our school to seek to influence every student we can to attend Ashland, nor need we make any claims for Ashland that cannot be sustained by the work done. There are some disadvantages, but there are some advantages also in attending Ashland College. For any one who desires to get quickly, without so much preliminary preparation, tho I do not undervalue preliminary preparation, to the studies that prepare him for active work in the ministry especially, Ashland is the place. However, if you want the preliminaries they have them also. And the instructors, for those who are just taking up the elements of an education are equal to, if not superior in many cases to the teachers in the lower branches in the larger and more famous schools of the country. For it is notorious that the lower branches in the preparatory schools of our big colleges are taught by inferior teachers, often by students.

Again, any who desire can combine the lower branches with theological work at Ashland, an advantage not enjoyed at many schools. Those who send to Ashland know this that they will have their children under Christian influences, which influences are set in motion by Christian instructors. So often children are sent to schools where the influence surrounding them in the formation days of their lives is doubtful or bad, return home with faith shattered. If your children go to Ashland, you have the assurance that they will be under the constant, watchful care of Brother Miller, than whom there is no more consecrated brother in the church.

And his power to make friends of his pupils is witnessed by the affection felt for him by every one who was under his teaching before.

Then, brethren, send your children to Ashland. Help to build up your own school rather than that of some other denomination.

And, finally, Ashland College needs your money. God has given some of you brethren means. When you make your will, don't leave it all to your children to quarrel over and waste, and probably ruin themselves with it, but put some of it into Ashland College as a perpetual endowment, the interest only of which shall be spent for the purposes of the school, and it will be teaching men and women for God when your body shall have long mouldered into dust.

None of us are too poor to do something before we die. If you cannot do more and you have not provided already